

Testimony of the
Connecticut ENT Society
Connecticut Urology Society
Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
Connecticut State Society of Anesthesiology
Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons

**On S. B. No. 232 An Act Concerning the Use of a Certificate, Professional Designation or Advertising in
Advising Senior Citizens**

**Before the Select Committee on Aging
On
March 9, 2010**

Good Afternoon, Senator Prague, Representative Serra and other distinguished members of the Select Committee on Aging, my name is Dr. David Emmel, and I am a board certified ophthalmologist practicing in Wethersfield, CT. I am here representing over 2000 physicians in the medical fields of Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Dermatology, Anesthesia, General Surgery and Urology in support of SB 232, An Act Concerning the Use of a Certificate, Professional Designation or Advertising in Advising Senior Citizens.

First, I would like to thank this committee for considering a bill that will improve transparency in the representation of professional designation, qualification, or advertising in those fields that advise or provide services to Connecticut's senior citizens. Although the intent of SB 232 is to protect senior citizens from deceptive financial practices, as physicians we believe that it is just as important to protect our senior's investment in good health. This premise brings us before you today because we believe that seniors and the general public would benefit greatly by broadening this transparency bill to include provisions to better identify healthcare providers.

A recent study projected that 8 of the 20 fastest growing occupations in the next four years will be in healthcare. This has encouraged many of the various healthcare specialties to develop PhD degrees and programs in order to make careers in their fields more attractive to individuals seeking a profession. Soon there will be doctors of pharmacy, doctors of nursing, doctors of education and counseling and many others that I will not take the time to list. The splintering of healthcare into smaller and smaller pieces also means that education requirements have become less broad and often less stringent. What does this mean for consumers? It means that consumers will have a more difficult time identifying who is a doctor of medicine and who is a doctor of education and counseling, and it makes it more difficult for a consumer to decide which provider is best suited for their health care needs. Identifying a provider's educational degree would certainly be a first step in achieving more transparency for Connecticut citizens.

In closing we ask for your consideration in amending SB 232, to broaden this great consumer bill to include measures to help identify health care providers accurately by requiring all healthcare providers to identify themselves in all listings, signage and advertising by using their actual degree and by not allowing the use of the loosely applied "Dr" designation without including the area in which they have received their degree. These measures will help to eliminate some of the ambiguity, confusion and misrepresentation in healthcare and aide our society in making informed healthcare choices. I thank you for your consideration and for raising this important bill.